

## Compte rendu

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par Cynthia Wilson

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NAIRN, A. E. M. **Problems in Palæoclimatology.** John Wiley and Sons, London, 1964, 705 pages.

On the eve of the invasion of the moon, as astronauts encircle the globe and rockets head for Mars, the imagination no longer boggles at the idea of ice ages and climatic change, of drifting continents, migrating poles and a slowing down of the earth's rotation.

A major difficulty and one of the fascinations of the study of past climates is the sheer breadth of the subject. It is a field which calls for interdisciplinary study. Its early development was in the capable hands of geologists and biologists who assembled a remarkable, ordered array of evidence for climatic change, and who put forward many of the existing hypotheses to account for them. Yet the results remained largely qualitative, the dating relative, theories speculative with little possibility of verification and with processes and mechanisms unknown. More recently, however, geophysicists, chemists and meteorologists have been increasingly attracted by the challenge of the subject, and their fresh approach and quantitative methods have injected new life and a new precision into the field. It has therefore become increasingly important that members of the various disciplines have the opportunity to come together.

From January 7-12, 1963, a Nato Advanced Study Institute was held at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England. *Problems in Climatology* is the collection of papers presented, together with the discussion that followed. The conference attended by members of several disciplines was arranged in sessions, each devoted to a different topic. These now form the major sections of the book. The editor, A. E. M. Nairn, has written an introduction to each section based on the authors' abstracts, which adds greatly both to the unity and understanding of each section and to the integration of the work as a whole; the discussion and detailed bibliographies follow at the end of each topic. A general introduction by W. H. Bücher provides the necessary historical background to the development of the ideas.

The conference dealt with the following topics: the use of fossil plants in palæoclimatic interpretations; evidence of climate from coal and coal measures; the recognition of ancient glaciations; Precambrian glaciation; geophysical techniques and ancient climates; Devonian climates; theoretical considerations and Quaternary climates; recognition of arid climates and wind direction studies; carbonates and evaporites; Permian climate; palæontology and climate; problems of sediments and soils. An excellent index completes the book.

It is an exciting and a scholarly work, of considerable interest to the geographer both as an example of the possibilities of an interdisciplinary approach and from the point of view of content. There is a growing need today for publications of this type to supplement the basic texts, which are quickly out of date. The role of the editor in the success of such a book is a dominant one. Apart from the presentation and integration of the content, there is the urgent need for rapid publication, made all the more difficult when many authors are involved. Although two years seem a rather long delay in the communication of research today, in actual fact this is a very considerable achievement on the part of Dr. Nairn.

Cynthia WILSON

**COLLABORATION. Inventaire des principaux termes de géomorphologie dans l'œuvre canadienne de Raoul Blanchard.** Dans : *Travaux de l'Institut de géographie de l'université Laval*, n° 10, Les Presses de l'université Laval, Québec, 1963, 51 pages.

Au cours de l'année académique 1958-1959, monsieur Louis-Edmond Hamelin avait groupé huit étudiants afin d'entreprendre un inventaire des principaux termes de géomorphologie dans l'œuvre canadienne de Raoul Blanchard. Les résultats de ce travail d'équipe sont restés assez longtemps dans les tiroirs, mais voici qu'une première édition prend place dans la série des *Travaux de l'Institut de géographie de l'université Laval*.

Cet inventaire sera-t-il de quelque utilité aux chercheurs? Nous croyons que oui. L'œuvre québécoise de Raoul Blanchard compte encore pour beaucoup dans l'orientation scientifique de nos jeunes géographes. Mais plus qu'aux chercheurs, c'est, croyons-nous, aux enseignants qu'est destiné ce répertoire. Nos professeurs de géographie du cours secondaire sont assez